



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



139TH AND 189TH RETURN TO U.S.

Soldiers from the 139th Brigade Support Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, arrived in Fort Hood, Texas, after serving a nearly yearlong deployment to Iraq and Kuwait in support of Operation New Dawn.

The 139th, comprised of Soldiers from the Brookings, Redfield, Watertown, Miller, Mitchell, Rapid City and Sioux Falls areas, deployed in July as a Logistics Task Force with a mission to provide supply, maintenance and transportation support to U.S. forces in Iraq and Kuwait.

A welcome home ceremony for the 139th will be held on Friday, May 18, at 10:00 am (CT) at the Swiftel Center in Brookings. Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Brookings Mayor Tim Reed and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, will be the featured speakers at the ceremony.

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard, arrived in Fort Hood, Texas, after a yearlong deployment to Iraq and Kuwait in support of Operation New Dawn.

The Rapid City-based 1-189th, comprised of 67 Soldiers, deployed in May 2011 with a mission to provide aerial medical evacuation support to U.S. and coalition forces. The unit is comprised of pilots, crew chiefs, medics, mechanics, avionics specialists and flight operations personnel.

Members of the 1-189th will spend about a week at Fort Hood completing de-mobilization requirements before returning to South Dakota.

Details of the 189th's arrival home to South Dakota have not been confirmed at this time.



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200TH WELCOMED HOME

The 184 Soldiers of the 200th received a hero's welcome, as hundreds of people gathered to cheer and greet the returning South Dakota Army National Guard unit along the streets of Fort Pierre and Pierre. More than 2,000 people were in attendance at Riggs High School for a welcome home ceremony held in their honor.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Sen. John Thune, Pierre Mayor Laurie Gill, Fort Pierre Mayor Sam Tidball, and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG, were featured speakers at the ceremony and congratulated them for a job well done.

"It is great to have you back...I am extremely proud of this unit," said Reisch. "The South Dakota National Guard has a tremendous legacy that goes back 150 years, and this unit – without question – has extended that legacy."

The 200th, of Pierre, Chamberlain and Mobridge, deployed in May 2011 as a multi-role bridging unit with a mission to maintain, repair and replace existing military bridges throughout Afghanistan. While in Afghanistan, members of the 200th built five bridges, deconstructed one, completed 54 bridge repair missions, conducted 10 reconnaissance missions to support theater engineer operations, and conducted 16 inspection missions to support theater bridging operations. To complete these missions, the 200th traveled a total of 12,500 miles throughout five regional commands in the country – sometimes traveling up to 760 miles on a single mission, and increasing their exposure to the number one enemy tactic in Afghanistan, improvised explosive devices, or IEDs. Additionally, supply and maintenance personnel for the 200th were responsible for more than \$110 million in equipment – three and a half times the amount of equipment that the same staff size is responsible for back in the United States. Maintenance personnel raised the initial readiness rate of this equipment from 61 percent, when the unit first arrived in theater, to 95 percent in four months. The unit also constructed a new maintenance facility to support current and future operations for follow on U.S. forces.

The 200th was awarded one Purple Heart Medal, nine Bronze Star Medals, 13 Navy Commendation Medals, two Navy Achievement Medals, 144 Army Commendation Medals and 33 Army Achievement Medals for their efforts in Afghanistan. An additional 21 Combat Action Badges were awarded to unit members for having received direct enemy fire while on missions.

This was the second deployment for the 200th, the unit deployed to Iraq in 2003-04 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



SDNG MUSEUM TO HOST ANNIVERSARY PARTY

The South Dakota National Guard is celebrating 150 years of service to the state and nation.

To commemorate the Guard's lineage of service, the South Dakota National Guard Museum is hosting a 150th anniversary party on Saturday, June 9, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The museum is located at 301 East Dakota in Pierre.

"We invite families to join us on June 9 and share in the rich history of the SDNG, which for over a century and a half, has given and will continue to give, its time and lives for causes greater than themselves," said Sonja Johnson, museum director.

"Our museum showcases weapons, uniforms and other artifacts carried or worn by South Dakota Guardsmen from the Civil War to the Gulf War," said Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary of the South Dakota Department of the Military. "This celebration will afford parents and children an educational opportunity as they hear first-hand about the history of the Guard."

Along with the tour, participants will be invited to compete in numerous games and enjoy birthday cake. Guests will be invited to sign a life-size anniversary card that Museum Director Johnson will present to Maj. Gen. Timothy Reisch, Adjutant General of the South Dakota National Guard.

"Our goal is to have 400 people join us for our celebration at the museum," said Johnson. "South Dakota's National Guard has played a major role in conflicts since the Civil War, as well as provided assistance to the state in times of domestic emergencies, such as floods, fires, tornadoes and winter storms."



SDNG TO CELEBRATE 150-YEAR HERITAGE

The South Dakota National Guard officially marked 150 years of service to the state and nation on Jan. 27, 2012, as the birth date of the organization's 1862 formation. To celebrate this historic event, the SDNG is inviting the general public to attend a free, open house event at Camp Rapid in Rapid City on Friday, June 8, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.

An official ceremony will kick off the event at 11:30 a.m. with comments from Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG. Following the remarks, free food and beverages will be available, as well as live music from the SDNG Army Band, and tours of the new Joint Force Headquarters Readiness Center, Barracks and Education Building and Troop Medical Clinic. An array of past and present military equipment, vehicles, artifacts and uniforms will also be on display, to include a number of informational kiosks highlighting the history of the SDNG.



SURINAME PARTNERS WITH SD GUARD TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The South Dakota National Guard's State Partnership Program welcomed four soldiers from the country of Suriname to share information about how to improve each other's Joint Operations Centers May 7-9 at Camp Rapid in Rapid City.

During the visit, the Surinamese and SDNG soldiers exchanged ideas on managing operations in response to domestic emergencies or natural disasters.

"Our JOC is different from Suriname's, yet we are similar in the fact that we both have the same mission," said Maj. Kathleen Dirk, state partnership coordinator. "It doesn't matter where you are in the world; we all have to respond to natural disasters. We are showing the Surinamese soldiers how we operate and are seeing if how we do business fits the needs of their country."

The JOC serves primarily as an information hub; where emergency operations are tracked and coordinated with leaders making decisions at emergency or disaster sites.

The Surinamese built a JOC three years ago to help respond to domestic emergencies in their country and are seeking information on how to make their operations more streamlined, said Dirk.

"The Surinamese are primarily concerned with how to effectively use their JOC if a flash flood were to occur," said Dirk. "In South Dakota, we have dealt with several floods in our recent history so we have relevant information to share with them."

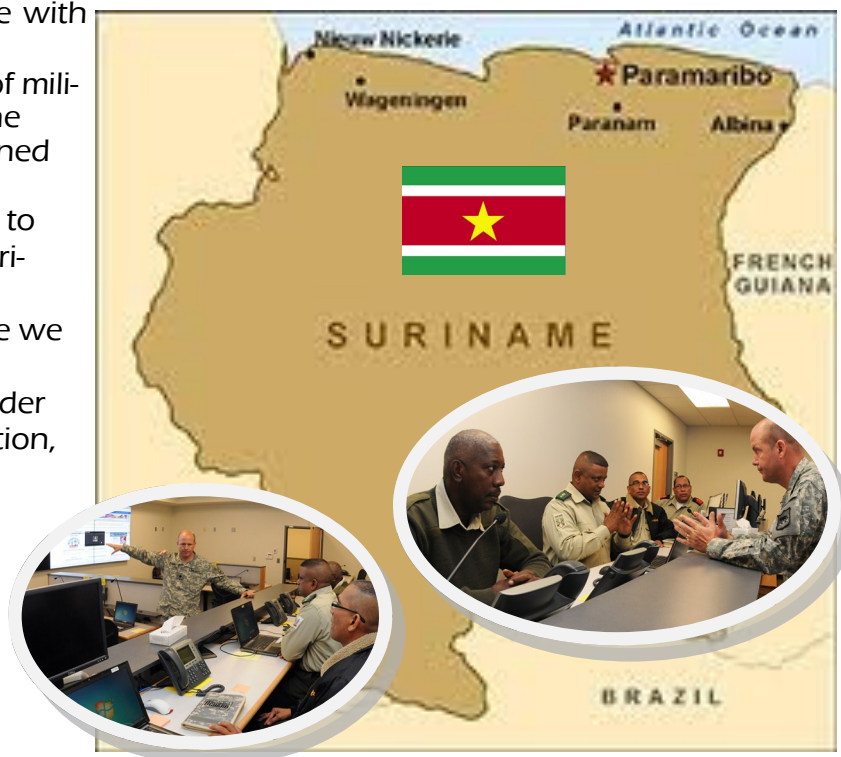
Lt. Col. Dan Iverson, assistant director of military support, gave the soldiers a tour of the SDNG JOC and discussed the lessons learned during the 2011 Missouri River Flood.

"Everyone has learned a lot on this trip to South Dakota," said Capt. Bob Mangal, Suriname's Joint Operation Center officer in charge. "We now know how to get where we want to be."

"We learned how to brief our commander everyday about the status of his organization, and that we need to have specialized people working in the JOC," continued Mangal. "We are thankful for what we have learned from the South Dakota National Guard and we look forward to making our JOC better so we can respond quicker when we are needed to serve our country."

Suriname and the SDNG have been exchanging ideas and developing a partnership since 2006 when the SPP was officially established between the two entities.

Similarities between the two partners makes the relationship beneficial because they can use and share ideas that will work well for each other. South Dakota was chosen to partner with Suriname because of their similarities in population size, land mass, agricultural based economies, and lack of significant language barriers.



VA OFFICIALS EXTEND COMMENT PERIOD

Honoring requests by the South Dakota congressional delegation, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Disabled American Veterans, the VA has agreed to extend the comment period for the public to give input on the re-configuration plan proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23 and VA Black Hills Health Care System to June 30, 2012. On June 30, the period for comment on the proposed re-configuration plan and submission of any alternate proposals ends.

Since December 12, 2011, VISN 23 and VA Black Hills Health Care System officials have been hosting town hall meetings in South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming to share information about the strategic planning proposals which focus on ensuring health care quality and safety, and strategies that bring health care services closer to where veterans live.

The community has been fully engaged in these discussions and the feedback has been thoughtful and productive. "We want to hear from our veterans and the community. This extended feedback period will give those who have not had sufficient time to submit their comments or concerns some additional time to have their voices heard" said Steve DiStasio, Director VA Black Hills Health Care System. "We welcome their input."

Veterans, family members, community and business leaders, and the general public are invited to read more about the proposals and share feedback on line at <http://www.blackhills.va.gov/VABlackHillsFuture/>.



NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES

More than 700 Veterans will travel to St. Louis, Mo., May 31 – June 5 to compete in the 26th National Veterans Golden Age Games, a national sports and recreation competition sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV), and Veterans Canteen Service (VCS).

Celebrating its 26th year, the games offer the largest sports and recreation competition in the world for military veterans age 55 and older. hosted by the St. Louis VA Medical Center, the competition features sports such as swimming, cycling, golf, track and field, bowling, table tennis and others, totaling 14 competitive events. Events are open to all U.S. military veterans age 55 or older who are currently receiving care at any VA medical facility.

The Games have grown from 115 participants its first year to more than 700 in 2011. It is the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world, and is made possible by the support provided by co-sponsors VCS and HHV.

The National Veterans Golden Age Games serve as a qualifying event for the National Senior Olympics. The National Senior Olympics is a community-based member of the United States Olympic Committee and recognize senior athletes as the best athletes in their respective age groups in the United States. For more information about the National Veterans Golden Age Games and other VA national rehabilitation programs, visit www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov.



SDNG TRAINS AFGHAN NATIONAL AIR FORCE ON JAWS OF LIFE

Members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 451st Engineer Detachment firefighters, of Sturgis, have conducted an exercise on the proper use of vehicle extrication methods with Afghan National Air Force firefighters members at Camp Marmal, Balkh Province, Afghanistan. The training evolution is designed to teach the proper methods to assess a crash scene and expedite the evacuation of victims who may be in need of immediate medical care.

Sgt. 1st Class Austin Hagen, fire chief, of Sturgis, says this training program is designed to prepare their Afghan counterparts on how to best react in a situation where every moment counts. "We teach them the proper way to save lives with the proper tools and techniques," said Hagen. By proper tools and techniques, Hagen refers to what is commonly called the Jaws of Life.

The training covers all necessary steps to recover a victim from a crash site. From stabilizing the vehicle to the removal of the victim with the hydraulic powered tools.

Since the 451st arrived at Camp Marmal, they have played a role in the training of their Afghan counterparts through mentorships and formal training.

Through the training, the instructors gain their own reward as they claim they are actively participating in the successful transition process, which gives them a high degree of satisfaction.



STAND DOWN TO BE HELD IN WAGNER

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System and Charles Mix and Gregory Counties Veterans Service Officer Roy Farabee are coordinating a Stand Down for September 11 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The Stand Down will be held at the SD National Guard Armory in Wagner (610 E. SD HWY 46).

Other partners working on the Stand Down with VSO Farabee are: Wagner VA Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), the American Legion, the VFW, and the Yankton Sioux Tribal Veterans Service Officer, as well as numerous local businesses.

The Stand Down provides veterans an opportunity to meet with county, state and federal veteran representatives and discuss benefits and services.

More details will be provided as they are finalized.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

STAND DOWN
September 11, 2012
10:00 am—2:00 pm
Wagner National
Guard Armory
610 E. SD HWY 46

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

The Black Hills National Cemetery will observe Memorial Day on Monday, May 28, 2012. There will be two ceremonies held at the Cemetery's Committal Shelter to memorialize all those who answered the call, and made the ultimate sacrifice, in defense of our great Nation. The theme is "Never Forget, Ever Honor."

The Traditional Ceremony will be held at 11:00 a.m. Guest speakers will include Governor Dennis Daugaard and Col. Mark Weatherington, Commander of the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The Native American Ceremony, sponsored by Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, will be held at 1:00 p.m. Note that this is a change from previous years.

NPS TO PRESENT HISTORIC LANDMARK PLAQUE TO VABHHCS

The Hot Springs campus of the VA Black Hills Health Care System was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service in June, 2011. A formal presentation of the Historic Landmark designation plaque will be conducted on Wednesday, May 30, 2012, at 3:00 pm at the VA Hot Springs Band Shell, located outside of Building 1 (Domiciliary). Immediately following the presentation there will be guided tours of the Domiciliary.

Upcoming Events

May 18—Welcome Home Ceremony for 139th Brigade Support Battalion—10:00 am—Swiftel Center in Brookings

May 19—Armed Forces Day

May 28—Memorial Day—State Offices Closed

May 30—VABHHCS Historic Landmark Presentation—3:00 pm (Hot Springs)

Jun. 7-10—VFW State Convention—Brookings

Jun. 8—SDNG 150-Year Anniversary Open House—11:00 am to 3:00 pm (Camp Rapid)

Jun. 9—SDNG Museum Anniversary Party—10:00 am—4:00 pm (301 E. Dakota)

Jun. 9—Marine Corps League Department of SD Convention—Pierre

Jun. 9-23 Golden Coyote Annual Training Exercise

Jun. 10-12—Dare to Dream Conference—Spearfish Holiday Inn

Jun. 14—Flag Day

Jun. 14-17—American Legion State Convention—Watertown

July 11—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 15—Sioux Falls—10:30 am.

July 21-22—Sioux Falls Air Show

Aug. 27-29—VSO Annual Benefits School—Pierre

Sept. 11—Stand Down—Wagner National Guard Armory—610 E. SD HWY 46 (10:00 am—2:00 pm)

STATE VETERANS HOME TO HOST MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

The Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home will host a Memorial Day Program on the campus on Monday, May 28, at 9:00 am (MT). The program will be on the front lawn by the Fallen Soldier Monument. In case of inclement weather the program will be moved into the building #3 auditorium. Keynote speaker will be CSM Larry D. Zimmerman Command Sergeant Major for the South Dakota Army National Guard. Musical entertainment will be provided by the Sandstone Singers and the Hot Springs Community Band.

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